

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 132

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Bob W. Smith of Martin.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of the General Assembly should honor those exemplary citizens who contribute significantly to Tennessee's diverse and dynamic culture; and

WHEREAS, Bob W. Smith of Martin is one such estimable individual who has worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous ways; and

WHEREAS, a native of Martin, Bob Smith was born on March 18, 1925, to Leon and Susie Bell Smith; and

WHEREAS, he attended the Weakley County Training School, an all-African-American school in Martin; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith received his first job at the tender age of ten, at Mrs. Waiter Morgan's Business College, during which time he also earned money by tap dancing upstairs at the Opera House; and

WHEREAS, Bob Smith served with valor and distinction in the United States Navy Sea Bees during WWII, rising to the rank of Chief Petty Officer First Class; and

WHEREAS, in 1941, Bob Smith and his female dance partner, known as the dance duo "Bob and Beck," became the first African-American song-and-dance team invited to perform at the University of Tennessee Junior College in Martin; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith served with acumen and alacrity for twenty-two years as an employee at Brooks Produce in Martin; and

WHEREAS, a jack-of-all trades, he was also part of the paint crew for twenty years at the University of Tennessee at Martin and, at other times in his estimable career, he served as a musician and a cook, specializing in barbeque; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith has graciously donated his time and energies to numerous noteworthy organizations; he is a former commander of University Post 69 of the American Legion in Martin, a former president of the Weakley County Training School Alumni, and a former member of the University of Tennessee at Martin Agriculture Council; and

WHEREAS, an exceptional asset to his community, Bob Smith is a ten-year member of the CME Planning Board of the Brownsville-Dyersburg District and a baritone singer in the Authentic Gospel Choir of Weakley County; he was an honorary five-year member of the University of Tennessee at Martin Rodeo team, and, for the last fifteen years, he has chronicled the history of African-Americans in Martin; and

WHEREAS, due to his community activism, he once served as the Grand Marshal of the annual Soybean Festival parade in Martin, and he was appointed by a Tennessee governor as an Honorary Tennessee Colonel, a moniker by which Mr. Smith is often affectionately referred; and

WHEREAS, Bob Smith is a longtime member of Martin Beautiful, a citizen's advisory committee of the City of Martin; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the committee and as a citizen concerned about Martin's African-American community and the appearance of northeast Martin, Mr. Smith was instrumental in the creation of Adopt-A-Site flower beds honoring several distinguished individuals, including Willis Brown, the late Miss Pearl Hayes, the late Charlie Moore, and the late Robert A. Nunley; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith is a public-spirited citizen of the highest order, and while recovering from colon surgery and cancer treatment during the summer of 2010, he still organized volunteers to clear brush and debris from his larger neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, he has also been an active and devout member of the Miles Chapel CME Church in Martin for seventy-eight years, serving for the last twenty-one years as the Church Treasurer and as Chairman of the Steward Board of Trustees; and

WHEREAS, Bob Smith epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean, and this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Mr. Smith for his accomplishments; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Bob W. Smith for his unwavering dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens, and extend to him our best wishes for every continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.